

**RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES
FACE-TO-FACE MEETING AGREEMENT**

**CENTRAL FALLS
MARCH 14, 2002**

Attending from Central Falls: Arlene Garrison, Special Ed. Director; Robert Wall, Special Ed. Coordinator; Patricia Morris, ESL Director; Eva Pytowska, Assistant Superintendent; Virginia daMota, Special State Admin.; Maureen Chevrette, Sup.; Jane Sessums, V.P. Elementary Teachers Union; Kathleen Rainone, Pres. Teachers Union; Walter Hounthan, V.P. Teachers Union; Jack Lyle, Principal High School; Monique Jacob, High School; Nancy Chenard, Feinstein; Robert Draper, Veterans, Nancy Carnevale, Veterans; Maureen Azar, Principal Feinstein; Lois Petruccillo, Feinstein; Marie Bernier, Ella Risk; Lou Koste, Ella Risk; Paulo Silva, Calcutt; Ronald Trahan, Calcutt; Bruce Macksoud, Prin. Calcutt.

RIDE Staff: Susan Wood, Office of Special Needs; Elizabeth Hyman, Office of Assessment; Dennis Cheek, Director Office of Research, High School Reform and Adult Ed; Linda Jzyk, Research, High School Reform and Adult Ed; Janet Carroll, Instruction; Sharon Osborne, Special Assistant to the Commissioner; Jenna Jackvony, Office of Network Information Systems; Rick Richards, Commissioner's Office; Andrea Castaneda, Office of School Improvement.

RIDE WELCOME AND MEETING ORIENTATION

Deputy Commissioner Todd Flaherty welcomed the group, gave an overview of the process and objectives of the meeting including:

- Establishing of agreements on “next steps as outlined in the School Performance Category Technical Assistance Bulletin with regard to required district/school/RIDE actions;
- Addressing district capacity for implementing activities/next steps (to be outlined in the May 1st CRP, Article 31 – Strategic Planning document for submittal to RIDE which also needs to be approved publicly in a Central Falls School Advisory Board meeting.);
- Addressing RIDE capacity to support, if applicable; and
- Generating a meeting report that needs to be made “public” at the district’s school advisory board meeting.

DISTRICT/SCHOOL RESPONSE

On behalf of the district, Central Falls Superintendent, Maureen Chevrette gave an overview of the work being done in the district to address issues related to the district's schools performance categories. She emphasized that the district's primary focus is on **curriculum** and **professional development**.

- **Curriculum** – Linked by priority issues – Mathematics being the most critical; writing – 2nd; English language arts – 3rd The Superintendent stated that the reason the scores are so low in Central Falls is because there are so many non-English speaking students; that Central Falls English speaking students are really doing well.

Mathematics – Bench marking teams looked at student scores and programs to support student learning. Adopted “Investigations” at the elementary levels and “Connected Mathematics” at the middle school level. Superintendent doesn't think the district will see improvement in scores for a “couple more years”.

Writing – Scored by teachers: Kid Writing data.

English Language Arts – Curriculum decisions are being made in response to New Standards and New Standards used to select core literature; curriculum relying on the requirements of the frameworks. This year scoring student work to create baseline data for grades 2 and 3.

Curriculum is being followed in every Central Falls classroom, including moderate special needs. An index is being prepared for all curriculum endeavors to see where the “cross-overs” are to support alignment with the standards. Benchmarking is being completed in K – 8 in language arts; completed in mathematics in K – 8; and at the high school, benchmarking will be tied to the NEASC visit.

- **Professional Development** - The final evaluation of the district's professional development plan has been delayed until next year. A small visiting group comprised of the Superintendent, a school principal and a RIDE staff member has visited every school improvement team in the district to assess individual school needs.
 - **Professional Development Academy** – Focuses on teacher development strategies; it is a contractual, teacher-run board offering opportunities outside the school day to faculty and staff.
 - **In-class professional development** focused on support teams and course work;
 - **Future professional development** activities will focus on more job embedded professional development; will be teacher led and reviewed by peers. Also will focus on school improvement

priorities (determined through test scores and survey) –
1st/Math, 2nd/Writing,
3rd/English Language Arts.

Based on the Negotiated Support Agreement in place since January 2001, Superintendent Chevrette reported on district work and initiatives in other areas as follows:

- **District Technology Plan** – Under the direction of RIDE Director Dennis Cheek, a technology study team was formed to analyze the technology needs of the district and to develop a new plan. The new plan which incorporated the strategic direction of Central Falls regarding all technology was developed and implemented as of July 1, 2001. CF principals to attend RIDE technology summer training.
- **Data Analysis** – A position for a data analysis specialist was created and posted over the last couple of months. RIDE staff will assist Central Falls staff members in making a final selection within the next couple of weeks.
- **Administrative Technology, Infrastructure and Training** – Recommendations as per the Central Falls negotiated support agreement and work plan of January 2001 implemented. SASI used to generate data to inform decisions regarding administrative technology needs including related professional development.
- **Budget Analysis** – Nothing done. RIDE needs to follow through.
- **Instructional Support** – The work as outlined in the negotiated support agreement and the work plan is progressing. A multicultural Resource Center has been established and professional development through the center is ongoing. Funding has been devoted to put a core program in place.
- **School Improvement/SALT** – Central Falls will continue on the regular SALT visitation schedule, however, self-study process will continue in each school. Two SALT school visits last year and there will be two more this year and all school rated low, not improving will be visited by either SALT or NEASC by the end of this year.
- **School Support/Special Education** - The Superintendent expressed the need to have someone examine how special education services are being delivered in Central Falls. The Special Education office continues its work to engage Central Falls staff in fulfilling the recommendations of SPED School Support visit plan. Curriculum is followed in every Central Falls classroom, including moderated special needs classrooms. In others, special needs teachers may follow

different curriculum, but are aware of district curriculum.

- **LEP/Bilingual** – The LEP program has been evaluated by John Hopkins and a report has been issued but not reviewed yet. The Field Service system in conjunction with Central Falls will work to implement recommendations to improve assessment and instructional services for LEP students.
- **Secondary Restructuring** – Work “progressing nicely”. A desegregation coach has been hired at CF High School. Once the HS accreditation visit is completed, school improvement planning and training will be generated with the America’s Choice schools network. A consultant is currently working with teams on literacy and language arts.
- **Parental and Community Involvement** – There are school liaisons in every building and a registration and outreach center has been put into operation. The Superintendent emphasized that Central Falls has spent a lot of “time and energy on this project.
- **Early Childhood** – Reading program fully implemented; two kindergarten teachers are state trainees.
- **Middle School Reform** – Middle School program growing quickly. A through training being provided every other day. Also have initiated an efficacy program; i.e. Saturday morning program for 8th graders and teachers. Students learning to work with the system to get better grades and teachers learning to use data to improve teaching and learning.
- **Title I** – The program is currently being evaluated by consultants hired by the district.

PROPOSED PROGRAMMATIC/INSTRUCTIONAL ACTION

Next members of the Central Falls district schools administration and school improvement teams reported on what the results of the categorizations meant to them and how they will be addressing improvement issues, as follows:

- **Central Falls High School** principal, Jack Lyle briefly reviewed his schools data and then outlined what they have been doing and will be doing to improve student scores.

The key component to support change in the high school is the standards- based America’s Choice program. It has shifted the focus in the high school so that teachers have become engaged in supporting standard based/driven instruction. “Next steps” for the high school is to become a “stage 2” America Choice school.

This program will support Mathematics ramp-up programs and a literacy ramp-up program to address the needs of low performing students in math and English language arts. This program will be aligned with the new standards benchmarking. HS has been using data to drive program decision making. In mathematics, they looked at 6 different mathematics programs and based on the needs of the students chose “Mathematics Connections” as the high school mathematics program. They also made the decision to drop general mathematics and now require all students to complete Algebra to graduate. Mathematics is also being taught using instructional manipulatives and is standards-based. Reading/Writing labs have been established and special programs for non-readers have been put in place. The high school has also been facilitating discussions with teachers about learning to work better – not necessarily harder.

Feinstein Elementary School – Principal Maureen Azar reported that she thought that students at Feinstein had done well in writing and problem solving. Feinstein students use the mathematics program – “Investigations” which is in line with the new standards and staff has received professional development over the summer. Teachers have worked hard setting benchmarks and even though this year is a “test year”, Ms. Azar feels they are on the right track, however feel frustrated over the lack of time for professional development (Professional development activities offered through the district, but teachers have to give up their own time outside of their classroom work to attend. Records are being kept on what teachers actually attended what activities)

- Re: Writing – The school does school-wide writing prompts and student awards are given for excellence.
- Re: Reading – New program in place “guided reading” that staff feels will greatly help improve reading scores. Professional development activities supporting this program will be offered this summer. The school has also been awarded a Title I grant for beginning readers. They will now focus on the “middle reader in 3rd and 4th grades - in the form of after school reading programs and computer programs.
- The school will also have a SALT visit over the next few months and are looking forward to this visit to guide their strategic planning over the next year.
- The school has just established an informal school based technology committee to look at technology needs, but teachers and staff has not accessed any training or funding to support training.

Veterans School – Principal, Bob Draper and SIT team member, Nancy Carnevale talked about the SALT visit (“useful”); test scores – “made some targets”; and the use of professional development activities to meet targets – especially in reading and writing. Mr. Draper then spoke about how they will use the performance categories to improve student scores: reorganize the SIT

teams with the help of a consultant; make sure that initiatives support benchmarking and new standards.

Re: technology – The Principal reports that the teachers at Veterans have been participating in computer (laptop) training. They now are having a hard time figuring out how to integrate what they've been learning into their classrooms. They need professional development opportunities to support them. Veteran teachers also report "time" (or lack thereof) as being a problem.

Note: At this point Superintendent Chevrette emphasized that teachers in Central Falls are doing 3 or 4 different things and are "maxed" out. She said that technology grants were not "forgotten", rather other priorities were set.

Ella Risk School – Lauren Costin, the Principal of Ella Risk talked about the reaction of staff to the low test scores. She requested that the scores for Ella Risk be re-analyzed because of extenuating circumstances – the school was refigured in 1999 adding a grade.

Calcutt Middle School - Principal Bruce Macksoud reported "not being shocked" at the low test scores. The SALT visit, along with a self-study, had mirrored the category results. In response, they have been setting priorities, focusing more on the work and following the data more closely and asking for feedback from teachers, parents and students. They have added a new mathematics program – "Connected Mathematics" and have set benchmarks. Their teachers and 8th grade students have also been involved in the Saturday morning efficacy program called practice school. Has been a great success – over 80% of the students in the practice school have improved drastically including almost reaching the standard using the new standards practice test.

Mr. Macksoud also spoke about the negative effect of student mobility on test scores. He said that this year over 350 students have either entered or exited their building. He also said that test scores were affected by the high number of inexperienced first-, second- or third-year teachers in his building. In response to needs, the principal cited the lack of space in his building, especially in grade 6 (31-32 students in a classroom). Over the next year the school's SIT team will be focusing on how to link the school improvement plan to targets and setting targets in English/language arts and science. The plan is that by next year, every teacher, parent and student will know what students need to know and be able to do. The intent is to work on school improvement through use of data and establishing coherence in the standards-based instructional system.

RIDE/CENTRAL FALLS AGREEMENTS – FINAL REPORT (BASED NEGOTIATED SUPPORT AGREEMENT/PSI)

The basis for the agreements on "next steps" is the already existing Negotiated Support Agreement through the progressive supported instruction process.

District Strategic Plan: It is the expectation that a new strategic plan will be fully developed where it will comply with all aspects of Article 31 and establish a district strategic direction for 2002 – 2007. This plan needs to be completed by May 2002. (Note: Guidance sent to districts on March 15, 2002).

School Improvement: School improvement teams and district will continue analyzing SALT reports and address how SALT is helping CF schools improve; and identify what further support the Field Service or PS&I team needs to provide, broker, and/or promote effective school improvement and data-based decisions for school-level planning.

Curriculum Development: Central Falls needs to complete by August 2002 all K-12 standards-based curriculum work in English language arts and math.

Technology - RIDE needs to support Central Falls by providing both technical assistance/expertise and financial support for the development of a district wide technology plan that incorporates the strategic direction of Central Falls. This includes both a Management Information Infrastructure and ????

- RIDE will work with Central Falls (to develop a budget) and the House Finance Committee to obtain continued resources to support the PS&I activities during the 2002 session;
- RIDE will continue to support the data analysis infrastructure which will focus on strategies for instructional support;
- RIDE will offer Central Falls principals technology summer training "slots" for 2002 training.
- Central Falls needs to carefully monitor results of All Kids including those who have been in Central Falls schools for extended periods. In this same vein, dealing with the mobility issues need to be part of the analysis for kids that are in the district, especially K – 4. They need to learn to desegregate data to look at the kid that starts CF in K and is still there in grade 4.

Professional Development: Central Falls will emphasize by working with teachers to learn to link curriculum to targets/benchmarking; Prof. development activities need to be linked to programs, curriculum, benchmarks across grades and schools; Link to district wide strategic plan.

- District needs to allow for time for professional development;
- Professional development activities will support building-level action plans.
- SIT teams need professional development to support school improvement decisions.
- RIDE will review the Ella Risk School scores based on information provided to RIDE through the Superintendent.

Budget Analysis: RIDE will assist with budget analysis -

Look at: Expenditures need to be aligned with objectives, goals, and targets;
Are there gaps in revenues that need short and long-term remedies?
Are there unbudgeted initiatives, programs that need to be included?

RIDE and Central Falls will review together the Bilingual/LEP John Hopkins Report plan put in place to support instructional services and improve assessment for LEP students.

RIDE and Central Falls will review together the Title I evaluation for possible programmatic changes and direction setting.